



MEMORANDUM

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Berks County Planning Commission
Berks County Services Center
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TO: Berks County Planning Commission
FROM: Amanda Timochenko, Transportation Planner II
RE: Reading Area Transportation Study LRTP Steering Committee Nomination
DATE: July 10, 2024

The Reading Area Transportation Study (RATS) is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Berks County. RATS facilitates the regionally, performance-based planning process that serves as the basis for spending state and federal transportation funds for improvements to streets, highways, bridges, public transit, bicycle and pedestrian networks allocated to Berks County. Federal and state regulations guide the transportation planning process which ensures a series of interrelated plans and programs are developed that align with federal and state objectives. As part of the transportation planning process, MPOs are required to establish Long Range Transportation Plans (LRTP) that guide transportation and land use decisions over a minimum 20-year horizon.

The Reading MPO FFY 2027-2050 Long Range Transportation Plan update began in October 2023. To initiate the update process, state regulations required that a 30-month kickoff meeting be held with PennDOT Central, PennDOT District 5-0, FHWA, FTA, and other transit agencies as necessary to review the methodology, work tasks, and schedule for the LRTP update process. This meeting was held on October 12, 2023, with MPO staff, District 5-0 staff, PennDOT Central staff, FHWA, and SCTA in attendance.

Federal regulations require that MPOs work cooperatively, continuously, and comprehensively with state and public transportation operators in the development of LRTPs. State regulations further the federal regulations by requiring that MPOs establish a Steering Committee. The Steering Committee should be comprised of representatives from the RATS Coordinating Committee Board, Berks County Planning Commission Board, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), PennDOT Program Center, PennDOT District, South Central Transit Authority, and other stakeholders with interests in the transportation planning process such as passenger rail authorities, airport authorities, freight/logistics representatives, active transportation representatives, and public service agencies.

The Steering Committee will provide regular input and feedback on the LRTP development process and will review/comment on draft work tasks. In addition, the Steering Committee will provide input and feedback on goals, objectives, and policies for the next 20 years covered by the plan.

The next step in the Reading MPO FFY 2027-2050 LRTP development process is to establish the LRTP Steering Committee. The first LRTP Steering Committee meeting is anticipated to be held in August 2024. Invitations to participate on the Steering Committee will be sent out July 22, 2024, with a Doodle Poll link included to establish the best meeting date and time for the majority of participants. The meetings will be held virtually using Microsoft Teams during office hours between 8AM and 5PM. The commitment to this task would be limited to seven or eight meetings scheduled over approximately an 18-month period that would conclude upon LRTP adoption by the RATS

Coordinating Committee in May 2026.

Action

The Berks County Planning Commission transportation planning staff serves as staff to the Reading MPO. As such, MPO staff is requesting that the Berks County Planning Commission members nominate a Board member to participate on the RATS LRTP Steering Committee.

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